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REVEREND WRITERS.*

THE theme is a broad one, admitting of historical and other treatments which it is not our intention now to undertake. Were all reverend writers of the weight and attractiveness of Robertson and Kingsley, we might find some difficulty in resisting an impulse to take the broadest survey. But where they are earnest, there is in others so much indecision; where they are perspicuous, others have mysticism, and narrowness is so likely to take the place of their liberalness, that as a theme engendering unalloyed enjoyment in its issues, it has few allurements. But of these two gentlemen, as types of two nobler phases of the priests of to-day, it is a pleasant task to say something. It is always pleasant to commend what we believe in. We say, *believe in*, in the sense of *respect for*; for the opinions of the one are not exactly those of the other, and our own may agree with neither.

Robertson is a conservator of the Church of England, but his conservatism is expressed with Catholic charity, and supported with the broadest sympathy for Christian earnestness, wherever found. He has no prurient cant. He believes in the good offices of outward religion, yet he cannot restrain himself from calling the spirit of the "religious press," in its controversial bigotry, a spirit "set on fire of hell." What he means he expresses in this manner:

There are two ways in which the steam of machinery may find an outlet for its force; it may work, and if so, it works silently; or it may escape, and that takes place loudly, in air or noise. There are two ways in which the spiritual energy of a man's soul may find its vent; it may express itself in action silently, or in words noisily; but just so much force as is thrown into the one mode of expression is taken from the other.

Again the broadness of his views is seen, when he claims that the true unity of the church consists in an harmonious diversity. A unity of belief by coercion is, he says, but

The unity of pebbles on the seashore—a lifeless identity of outward form, with no cohesion between the parts—a dead sea-beach on which nothing grows, and where the very seaweed dies.

Such free untrammelled thinking, going to the eternal depths of man's nature, and looking reverently upon it, has revealed the landmarks of all that is great in modern philosophy, science, and art; and we are not surprised to read in the brief memoir appended to the volume, that this whole-souled divine had been a *confrère* of Ruskin at Oxford, and was among the first to appreciate the genius of Millais, and give his adherence to what the memoir calls "the soundness of principle underlying the eccentricities of the Pre-Raphaelites."

* Sermons preached at Trinity Chapel, Brighton, by the late Rev. FRED. W. ROBERTSON. *Third series.* With memoir by William Sawyer. *From second London edition.* Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 1858. Sir Walter Raleigh and other papers. By CHARLES KINGSLEY. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 1858.

Kingsley is, in some respects, the reverse—the same ennobling aim working in a man of somewhat different temperament. Robertson would make brothers of men possessing different sentiments, by the plan of harmonious counterpoise; Kingsley would make the everlasting sympathy of a common nature fraternize the world. The idea working in him makes him a brother of the heroic men of the Elizabethan age. History is his prompter, as his own charitableness is Robertson's. He earnestly disbelieves the scandal attached to the name of the virgin queen, as a gallant man in sight of her nobility would. He cannot believe the English had a tyrant in bluff Hal, because tyranny can never command contemporary esteem. He defends the puritans from the sneer now so often given them, out of very self-respect, and shows that what we most laugh at them for, we absolutely most accord with them in. If we are a mechanical age, such a poet as Tennyson shows that poetry of the least mechanical kind can exist; and if the puritans were austere, austerity could allow a Milton, and perhaps *act* even better poetry than was written. He claims that Cromwell, delighting to talk over the worthies of Rome and Greece, and preserving for the nation Raphael's cartoons and Andrea Mantegna's Triumph, was not an uniprurient incident. The highly-born gentlemen of the Long Parliament were no haters of the beautiful, and knew that art could be something more than Popish. At the same time, we are not surprised that one who believes most in acted religion (see his *Two Years Ago*) should, of a certainty, soonest subscribe to the theory of an acted art.

The whole theory of art, its dignity and vocation, seems to us at times questionable, if coarse facts are to be allowed to weigh (as we suppose they are) against delicate theories. If we are to judge by the examples of Italy, the country which has most of all been devoted to the practice of art, and by that of Germany, the country which has raised the study of art into a science, then a nation is not *necessarily* free, strong, moral, or happy, because it can "represent" facts, or can understand, how other people have represented them. We do not hesitate to go further, and to say that the present imbecility of Germany is to be traced in a great degree to that pernicious habit of mind, which makes her educated men fancy it enough to represent noble thoughts and feelings, or to analyze the representations of them; while they do not bestir themselves, or dream that there is the least moral need of bestirring themselves, towards putting these thoughts and feelings into practice. Goethe herein is indeed the typical German: God grant that no generation may ever see such a typical Englishman.

As consonant with such ideas, when he comes to speak of Art, as such, we find him liking pagan and naturalist art; considering Titian and Correggio as unappreciated geniuses, whose excellences the world will, in some saner mood, rediscover; holding in direct opposition to Rio, that Raphael improved steadily all his life through, and that his noblest works are not those somewhat simpering Madonnas, and somewhat impish Bambinos (very lovely though they are), but those great coarse, naturalist, Protestant cartoons, which Cromwell saved for the British nation.

I expect no one to agree with all this for the next quarter of a century; but after that I have hopes. The world will grow tired of pretending to admire Manichean pictures in an age of natural science, and of building churches on the popish model for Protestant worship; and art will let the dead bury their dead; and beginning again where Michael Angelo and Raphael left off, work forward into a nobler, truer, freer, and more divine school than the world has yet seen—at least so I hope.—P. 419.

And of Mr. Ruskin, praise from such a writer as Kingsley has peculiar weight. The form is of a dialogue.

"Are there not in his books more and finer passages of descriptive poetry—word-painting—call them what you will—than in any other prose work in the English language?"

"Not a doubt of it, my dear Claude; but it will not do for every one to try Mr. Ruskin's tools. Neither you nor I possess that almost Roman severity, that stern precision of conception and expression, which enable him to revel in the most gorgeous language without ever letting it pall upon the reader's taste by affectation or over-lusciousness. His style is like the very hills, whose woods enrich, without enervating the grand simplicity of their forms. Like, too, the glorious Norman cathedrals, of which he is so fond, rather magnified than concealed by the innumerable multiplicity of its ornamental chasing and coloring."

In closing it is suggestive to note the differing grounds that these two divines assume as the reason of the visible accessions that the Romish church has, of a few years past, made in England. Mr. Robertson accounts the loss to Protestantism as arising from the natural dependence of the soul, which finds nothing but dogmatical controversy among denominations; and longing for a sustaining arm, sees the offered one of Rome, as presenting God as a *fact*, and not a highly probable supposition. Many minds, he contends, can only find rest in certainties like that, and the internal disputes of Protestantism present nothing of the kind. *A stern fact allures the craving soul.* On the other hand, Mr. Kingsley writes with corresponding largeness of thought, but almost in an opposite direction. He thinks that the Reformation, in ignoring the certain artistic tendencies that the human being can hardly live without, failed of one of the highest ends. The Romish church supplies this desire in its legends, its pictures, its traditions; and minds, that are so imaginative that they can only rest where their imagination can also play, are drawn irresistibly to it. Therein has Protestantism sinned, and to-day is discovering that she has sinned, and such sins are working their own cure. He allies it to that great revulsionary reaction, in Germany, of a half-century ago when Schlegel led the way in the recantation of the Protestant formulæ: *The symbol of a fact allures the craving soul.* We are not sure that Truth does not lie equally with each; and that it is these seemingly opposite truths brought together, that has given, and is giving, Romanism its strength. The respective side of this Truth that each of these writers discovers, is strongly suggestive of their two characters.

W.

HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE OF KIANG.

ADVERTISEMENT.

No sooner had my corps of mandarins commenced their operations, than I set myself to work to find the most favorable market for my literary undertaking. Having always been imbued with a wholesome respect for Yankee enterprise, Yankee appreciation, Yankee intelligence, Yankee generosity, Yankee everything, it needed no arguments to persuade me that a Yankee public was the public *par excellence* for my History of Kiang. Besides, had I selected England, enterprising Yankee publishers would have found a way to print my history "a leetle" in advance of my London agents, and if I hate one thing more than another, it is to have some one come the Yankee over me.

The next thing in order was whom to select among all the publishers, printers, and editors of books, newspapers, and periodicals, that offer themselves to a literary caterer in the extensive country of the stars and stripes. I promptly issued the following circular to parties interested, all over the United States, in order to resolve this problem:

NANKIN, January, 1868.

Esq.

DEAR SIR: I am preparing a *History of the Empire of Kiang*—a history which, considering the antiquity of the empire, and my known ability as a historian, cannot fail to be instructive and interesting to the public. Please to inform me by return mail of the circulation of your periodical (or in case of a publisher, of the extent of your business connection), of the class of readers you are likely to reach, and what terms you are willing to offer for the use of the manuscript.

Yours truly,

N. SCRIBERTUS.

The following are samples of the numerous answers I received:

NEW YORK, April, 1868.

HON. N. SCRIBERTUS.

DEAR SIR: I shall be very happy to publish your History of Kiang. My business connections extend all over the United States, and comprise the most intelligent portion of our citizens. My terms are very simple: you will receive one half of the net profits, after paying the cost of publication, commissions, storage, advertising, editorial notices, interest, risk, insurance, canvassers' fees, and other incidental expenses. You will oblige us by an early reply, inclosing a liberal remittance to cover immediate expenses, in order to keep down the interest account.

Yours respectfully,

L. LEON,

Publisher.

NEW YORK, April, 1868.

N. SCRIBERTUS, Esq.

DEAR SIR: You propose to publish a history of Kiang, and refer to your known ability as a historian as guaranty of its excellence. We regret to say that we never heard of you before; and what is more, your ability as a historian, if you have any, can only become known through the daily press. We should advise you to publish a sample chapter of your history in our widely circulated journal, and follow up with liberal advertisements which we are always willing to enforce with a proportionate amount of editorial comment. We also connect with